

Project Proposal

What

Introduction

I want to create a **video** and a **book** about *the end of a love story*. They'll be closely intertwined, as they both draw on the writing material I produced over the first year.

Writing has been the *core* of my artistic practice. It even took over image-making for a while. I feared I lost the ability *to think in images*, for I only thought in *prose*. Eventually, I found out that the visuals hadn't gone asleep: they were just gathering as much information as possible in silence. They **listened**, and then they spoke back to **provoke** the writing. I see my first-year's production as a fruitful **dialogue** between **writing** and **visual-making**. For this reason, I wish to give voice to both sides within my final projects.

Translating: A process of compression

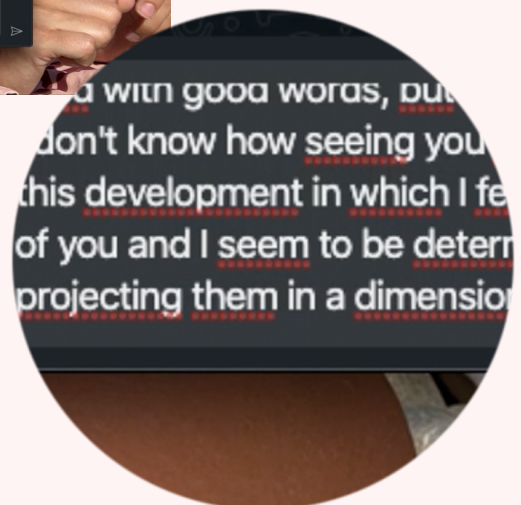
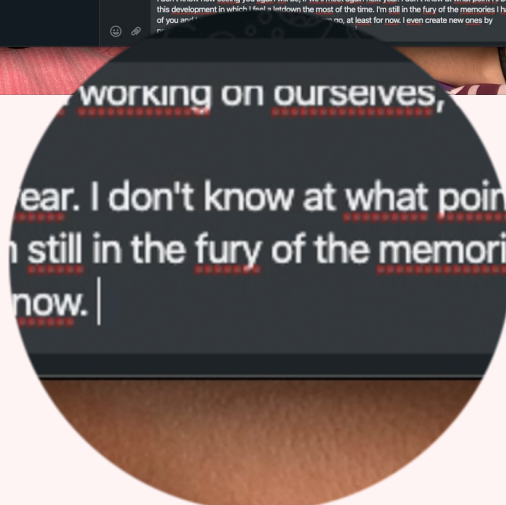
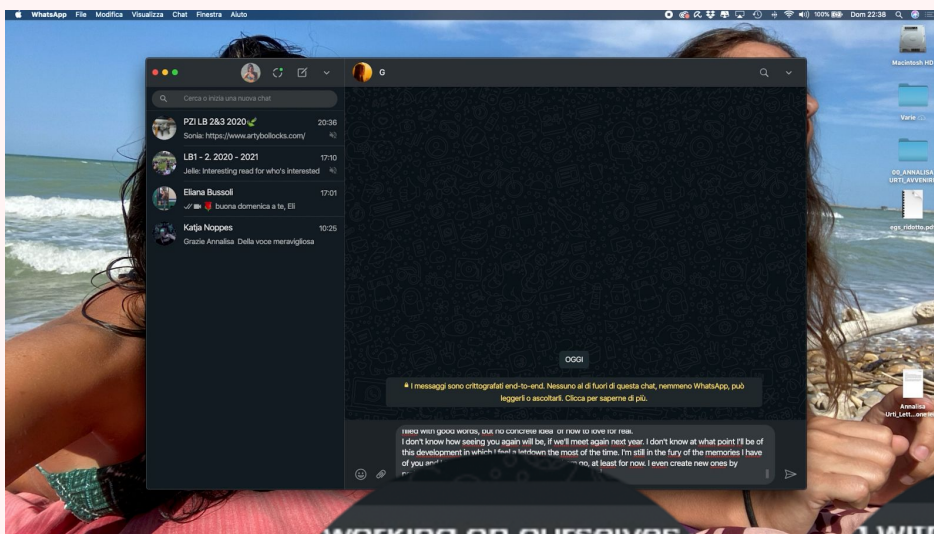
Initially, I wrote all the material further explored in my projects in Italian, my **mother tongue**. **Translating** became then an important and necessary part of my process. I used to live in English while I wrote those texts: I had class in English, read in English, ordered my coffee in English, argued in English, celebrated mass in English; but I was never able **to think** in any different language than my own, the same one I dream in. Even when translation preserves the content, I believe the **loss** of information is inevitable. At least, that's what I experienced. Throughout the process of translation, the **temperature** of the original texts cooled down. A dynamics not so distant from that of the **digital compression**: a compressed file not only loses **quality** but also **weight**, making it able to travel faster through the net for instance. In these terms, my limited knowledge of the English language might have actually been the true initiator of a rich and coherent body of work. The **book** and the **video** I wish to make as my final projects will both go through the same translating process.

A book: *Lacrime d'inchiostro* (Tears of Ink)

The book will be in the form of a **diary**. More specifically, a **collection of letters** that will never be sent. Throughout its pages, the writer, a young woman, engages a mysterious, anonymous **you** with an overflowing inner **dialogue**. The context of the extracts reveals the shifting nature of the recipient of each letter: **God, the lover, the mother**. They witness the movements of the writers' soul while she documents the end of a love story that scarred her deeply. The creative practice of writing will offer her a **platform** from which to unfold her heart and **communicate** herself as well as **a path to liberation**. This book draws on charged personal material I wrote last year. Working with it meant facing issues such as the *risk of auto referentiality* I talk about in the 'Why' section.

A video: *La nostra chat era un capolavoro!* (Our Chat Was A Masterpiece!)

As an attempt to interrogate such a personal writing material, I intuitively typed an abstract from it into **WhatsApp**. It's not the first time that the world of the **digital** knocks on my writing's world's door to *provoke* it. In the first version of the video, the typing of the text goes *backwards*. Sound is also reversed. The flashing cursor running after the vanishing letters catches the viewer's attention and creates a sense of **frustration**, as the words get deleted before the reader can take the entire sentence in. A race against the clock. Here, the *point of view of the writer* is still predominant. In fact, the WhatsApp's interface shows no dialogue at all. Not that I ever considered the previous



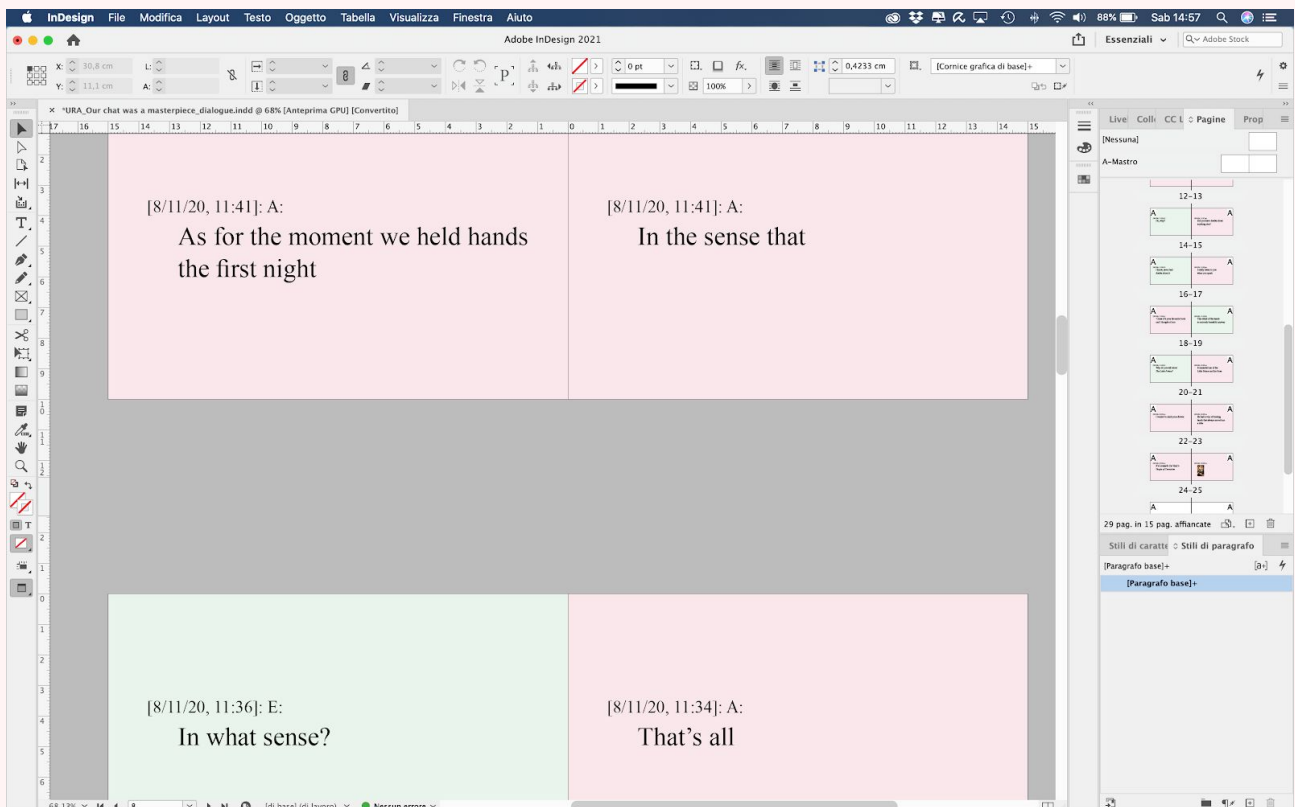
works as real one-character-monologues: each medium has its **specific grammar** and because of it, it constitutes an *independent point of view* itself. I think of media not as something to force under the weight of my desires, but mostly as a speaking entity I can learn from. Yet, my concerns around the **concept of point of view** brought me to elaborate a second version of the video I'm currently working on. Again, a race against the clock, only this time the reader is asked to climb their way up from the last to the very first word ever delivered into a conversation between two long-gone lovers.

How

Writing, selecting, translating, reading, redrafting

As I mentioned in the **‘What’** section, writing and translating are two pervasive processes in my artistic practice. They’re always preceded by a **selection procedure**: for the **book**, I intend to go through the writing material I produced last year and make a selection of extracts to translate. Once the translation process is done as well, I’ll take some time to have a close reading of the resulting text. At this point, It would be helpful to go through it with someone, a tutor perhaps, who could help me with polishing the language and reflect upon the structure of the book. After some **pondering**, I’ll make a second draft, which could even undergo great changes in the **sequence of the extracts** and in the final **form** of the book.

For the **video**, I started translating the messages of a conversation on my phone as a base to the **scripting** of a new dialogue. I proceed from the last to the first message of the conversation. I created a sequence in InDesign and assigned different colours to the two characters involved. When I get to the top of the chat, I’ll have a close reading of it and apply changes whether I feel it’s needed. I’ll speak about the last passage of the process in the next paragraph.



Working with software: After Effects

Finally, I'll create a **simulated WhatsApp interface** with **After Effects**. In order to do so, I'm learning the basis for text animation through online tutorials and Barend's precious advice. I think working with him would be a great enrichment to the work. Meantime, I'll also dedicate myself to the **sound design** of the piece.

Timetable

November/December	Translating, translating, translating! I'll dedicate the two upcoming months to translate the <i>body of writing</i> that will then merge both into the book and into the video . Meanwhile , I'll keep studying the principles of text animation on After Effects for the video and make a short prototype to show to my tutors and peers
January/February	Reading and pondering time! Here, I'll have a close reading of the <u>first version</u> of the book and the <u>sequence of translated messages</u> for the video . I'd like to polish the language and make considerations about <i>eventual changes</i> of plans for both my projects. Also, I'll start focusing on the sound design of the video
March/April	Redrafting time! I'll start working on the second draft of the book and create a new prototype for the video
May/June	Final touches!

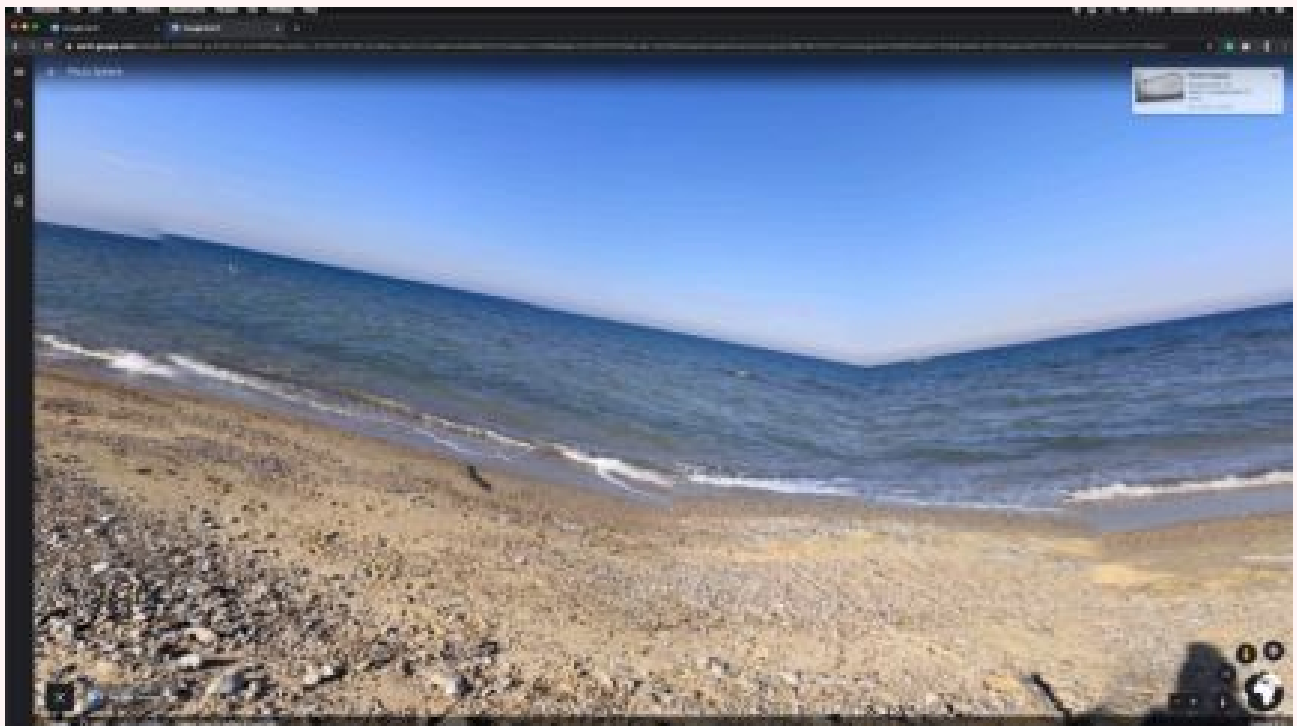
Why

An overtaking writing practice

I started working on *Tears of Ink* in October 2019, when I caught what seemed to be a true **writing fever**. Not only had I never written anything so personal before, but also it was the very first time that the act of writing was accompanied by the floating presence of a **potential reader**: an **omniscient eye** onto my secret inner world with whom I was **in dialogue**. *I knew nothing of this reader*. Writing for them felt like welcoming a total stranger into my bedroom. I remember asking myself: “**Do I even want the reader to be so close to me?**”. Moreover, will the **specificity** and **intimate nature** of these texts suffocate them?

Relation to previous practice

As I mentioned in the ‘Introduction’, **writing** and **image-making** lived in **close contact** throughout the first year of the master. For example, my eye piece *Domani ti dimenticherò meglio* (Tomorrow I will forget you better)¹ was made by juxtaposing images I hadn’t taken myself to an extract from *Tears of Ink*: I traced the love story I was obsessively writing about on **Google Earth**. **A meta-cinematic experience**. Frequently, the images provided by the software happen to be distorted as it’s possible to see in the last scene of the video: the line of the horizon is broken in the centre and tends downwards. Within these **errors of transcription**, the software becomes **visible**.



¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YsgyZcyYcgERU6XSljAD1Rk5PkIhEZ71/view?usp=sharing>

Once its virtuality is declared, the eyes of the user are disillusioned. **Disillusion** is one of the principal tangible feelings coming out from the voice-over's words as well: the narrator virtually revisits a reality that they once lived and that is now **lost in time**. In a way, memories are a virtual representation of reality. They are the images of the world impressed on one's peculiar subjectivity. Therefore, they shrink and inflate according to the emotional baggage that one has. In this sense, the contrast between a **text** so **genuinely personal** and **imagery** that is **impersonal to its core** brought *new air* to the writings. This is something I'd like to explore further with my final **video project**.

References

1. Imago, M (2007) **(a+b)³, performance**

Two lovers interact with each other in the space of a cube with removable fabric faces. When war comes, the girl draws the shadow of her lover onto an enormous piece of paper. It's a never ending game of lights, projections, reflections, shadows and silhouettes: an attempt to grasp the shapeless nature of the other. Funny enough, I never got to see this performance live. I lived it through the words of a friend of mine. It felt so close to me that I searched for it online and tried to reconstruct it through videos and pictures. I was looking for a scene in particular that tickled my imagination: the two lovers are sitting at a table with a bottle of wine between them. They don't speak, they only look at each other. As the girl exhales the smoke of her cigarette two floating words become visible: "**ti amo**", *I love you*. When the boy's turn comes, the words "**anch'io**", *me too*, appear in the darkness of the room.

I have a linguistic obsession with words, their roots, and the meaning they're charged with. They hold unlimited communicational power to which there's always an underlying side. The **unsaid**, the **tension between two unspoken words**, can be as powerful as those which were said aloud. At times, even more. That's something I never forgot, especially when it comes to my writing: I try to **balance said** with **unsaid**.



2. Rist, P (2015) *Tu mich nicht nochmals verlassen* (Do Not Abandon Me Again), **video installation**

I could have chosen any piece by Pipilotti Rist as she has one of the most coherent body of works I've ever seen. I'm particularly fond of this video installation for its **title**. Titles are as important as the actual works for me. They can either exalt a piece or downplay it. In this work, the projection of a fluorescent sky scattered with stars, planets, and nebulae is projected onto an empty double bed. Pipilotti Rist has a **way of approaching technology** that is even *more than emotional*: it's almost **organic**, an extension of her actual body. This aspect of her poetics allows her to touch themes such as intimacy in a way that I resonate much with. I read a book about her in which her philosophy is linked to Marshall McLuhan's ***The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man***. Yet, instead of seeing technology as responsible for self-amputation of the human body like McLuhan writes, Pipilotti Rist is much more interested in the concept of technology as a tool that can *empower* and *extend* the human body. I don't know if I always agree with that, but her philosophy certainly influenced my research.



3. Atkins, E (2014), ***Ribbons***, video

Ribbons is a drunken soliloquy divided in chapters that focuses on **solitude**, a **need for love**, and **rebuttal**. Ed Atkins created a virtual world populated by grotesque pub characters estranged from the surroundings. The protagonist of this section of the video speaks to the camera and tries to communicate his feelings. He's sitting alone at the bar rail. He does not look for somebody else to sympathize with him, but he speaks to the camera instead. Technology can fill gaps but also create **distance**.



4. Nitro, (2015) ***L'oracolo di Selfie*** (The Oracle of Selfie)², Suicidol

Nitro is one of my favourite Italian rap singers, one of the cruellest. In this track, he denounces the impact that social media and the necessity to always be connected have on humans' lives. He criticizes how information is now taken as knowledge only because it is easily accessible. Throughout the song, he touches themes like **ethics** in the era of hyper-communication and the construction of the self when bombarded by images on a daily basis.

The Internet is here brilliantly compared to *religion*. This song has been a fruitful source of inspiration when I came to approach the grammar of new media in art, such as the video.

² Link to English translation of the lyrics: [https://pzwiki.wdka.nl/mediadesign/User:Lacrimed%27inchiostro_\(Tears_of_ink\)](https://pzwiki.wdka.nl/mediadesign/User:Lacrimed%27inchiostro_(Tears_of_ink))

5. Godard, J-L (1965) ***Alphaville***

There's a scene from this film that is dear to me: Anna Karina's character reads aloud the words of Paul Eluard's ***Capital of Pain*** and remembers the meaning of words now forbidden in Alphaville such as love. Before meeting Lemmy Caution, a Special Agent undercover, she used to change love for voluptuousness, for that was the only concept allowed in Alphaville, a futuristic town run by a computer.

